

WASHINGTON - U.S. Congressman Allen Boyd (D-North Florida), a member of the House Appropriations Committee, announced today that the Florida Rural Broadband Alliance, a collaboration of public and private companies spearheaded by Opportunity Florida, will receive \$23,693,665 in federal funding to expand access to broadband internet in 14 Florida counties, including eight counties in North Florida. Today's announcement brings the total amount of federal funding Congressman Boyd has secured this year to increase access to high-speed internet in Florida to more than \$90 million.

"In today's world, having access to high-speed internet can be the difference between staying competitive and falling behind. A modern and reliable broadband network allows our schools to create new learning opportunities for our children, enables business owners to expand their offerings to the global marketplace, and helps our communities attract new small businesses, which in turn creates new local jobs," said Congressman Boyd. "Working together, this federal funding – coupled with nearly \$70 million in additional federal funding our region has already received to expand broadband internet – will lay the foundation for long-term economic growth and job creation in North Florida for decades to come. I am very pleased to have been a part of these accomplishments and look forward to continuing to bring smart projects and economic development opportunities to North Florida."

"Broadband is a major tool in helping rural areas stay competitive in the industrial market, and it will increase employment opportunities for the rural areas of Florida," said Johnny Eubanks, President of Opportunity Florida.

The Florida Rural Broadband Alliance will use this funding to connect residents, community institutions and small businesses in 14 counties to high-speed broadband internet. The project, known as the Middle Mile network, will connect as many as 190 community anchor institutions to broadband, including 41 public schools, 30 public safety organizations, 28 libraries, 20 institutions of higher education, and 31 government buildings and centers. Collectively, the project is expected to create hundreds of local jobs and reach as many as 417,600 people and nearly 16,000 businesses.

The counties included in this announcement are: Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty and Washington in North Florida; and DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee in South Central Florida.

Congressman Boyd also announced that the City of Tallahassee will receive \$1.2 million in federal funding to utilize existing broadband technology to enhance workforce skills, educational opportunities, and digital literacy among low-income, low-literacy residents in economically depressed parts of the city. The city will also use the federal funding to create an online broadband accessibility curriculum, which will provide students an opportunity to develop digital literacy and other skills starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school.

Today's announcements build on Congressman Boyd's commitment to increase economic development and enhance learning opportunities by expanding broadband technology in North Florida. Yesterday, Boyd announced that Quincy Telephone Company, a Quincy-based company, will use nearly \$1.4 million in federal funding to design and construct a new broadband network that will bring high-speed service to 428 households and businesses in Gadsden County, Florida, and a small portion of Decatur County, Georgia.

Earlier this month, Congressman Boyd secured \$38 million in federal funding for Windstream Florida, Inc. to provide high-speed internet access to underserved homes and businesses in Suwannee and Lafayette counties. The project is expected to extend access to more than 50,000 homes and 4,700 businesses.

In February, Boyd fought to bring more than \$30 million in federal funding to the North Florida Broadband Authority to expand access to high-speed internet in 14 North Florida counties through the creation of a new 1,200-mile fixed wireless broadband network. Known as the Ubiquitous Middle Mile project, the network is expected to reach more than 154,000 households and 27,000 businesses in our area and will be the first-ever network to provide open access to broadband internet services for both private entities and public institutions in the underserved areas of North Florida.

Funding for these projects came through broadband initiative programs of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which was signed into law last year with Congressman Boyd's support.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CONTACT:

Christopher Cashman, 202-225-5235

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BOYD SECURES NEARLY \$24 MILLION TO EXPAND HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS IN RURAL AREAS OF FLORIDA

More than \$90 million in federal funding secured this year for broadband expansion in Florida

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